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**Desant From the Sea: An Option for the
Operational Employment of a
Marine Air-Ground Task Force**

**A Monograph
by
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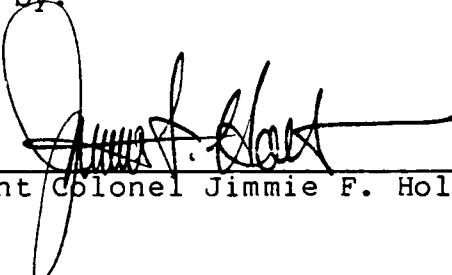
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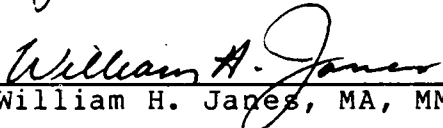
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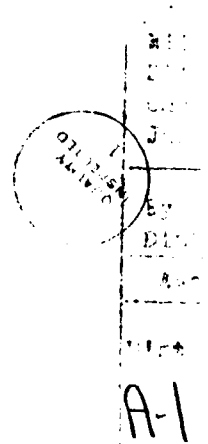
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ABSTRACT

DESANT FROM THE SEA - AN OPTION FOR THE OPERATIONAL EMPLOYMENT OF A MARINE AIR-GROUND TASK FORCE, by Major John R. Priddy, USMC, 48 pages.

This monograph examines the feasibility of adapting the Soviet concepts of "desant" and the Operational Maneuver Group for amphibious application in future joint campaigns. It is based on premises that future employment of U.S. military forces will probably be focused within regions of the Third World, that these forces will be of joint configuration, and that impending force reductions will demand their most efficient utilization. Given these parameters, a future joint force commander will be challenged to employ his diverse forces with imagination - and an appreciation for their unique capabilities - to achieve a synergism of available combat power to accomplish his assigned mission. However, despite emphasis on the operational level of war, little formal study has explored the possible integration of amphibious warfare with such related concepts as operational maneuver and deep battle. To resolve these deficiencies, a modern Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) may prove capable of executing an amphibious variation of the Soviet concepts of deep battle and "desant" to achieve operationally significant results.

To determine conceptual feasibility, the monograph first describes the background and features of Soviet deep battle theory and its resultant "desant" and Operational Maneuver Group concepts. These concepts are then analyzed through the framework of the AirLand Battle tenets to establish compatibility with current U.S. doctrine. Two historical cases are then examined to ascertain the validity of theory and identify lessons of possible benefit to future application by modern amphibious forces. Finally, the characteristics of contemporary amphibious forces are reviewed to determine practical feasibility, deficiencies between capabilities and requirements, and implications for future application.

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Introduction

Despite current emphasis on the operational level of war, with its focus on the application of military force to attain strategic goals, little formal study has been devoted to the integration of amphibious warfare into the concepts of operational maneuver and deep battle. The fact is that amphibious operations are still limited to tactical relevance, specifically the seizure of advanced bases and initial introduction of ground forces ashore. Further, due to their flexibility of composition, speed of deployment and closure times to a theater, Marine forces and doctrine have increasingly concentrated on sustained ground combat ashore. Consequently, their planned mode of employment in a joint campaign often assumes that character without just consideration for the operational contribution they can provide. Through their amphibious "force entry" capability, depth can be added to the battlefield. Since future campaigns can be expected to seriously test the abilities of all U.S. forces, the full employment potential of all components must be identified, understood, and exercised to ensure expedient and economical exploitation of their capabilities throughout the conflict spectrum.

The principle benefit offered a joint commander by embarked Marine forces is operational maneuverability in conjunction with the Navy's control of the seas. According to FM 100-5, Operations, maneuver is "the movement of forces in relation to the enemy to secure or retain positional advantage." (1) Further, at the operational level maneuver seeks a decisive impact on the conduct of

a campaign by attempting to gain advantage of position before battle and by exploiting tactical successes to achieve operational results.(2) Thus, the question for future commanders is how to translate this Marine advantage and the opportunities presented by the added dimension of the seas into operational relevance. Insights to possible solutions may be provided by adapting some concepts from the Soviet's "deep battle" for application by amphibious forces.

Unlike the United States, the Soviets have developed two specific "all-arms" forces to strike into the enemy at operational depths. Operational Maneuver Groups (OMGs) are ground delivered units of sufficient power to achieve operational results independent of direct support from the main ground combat forces.(3) "Desant" forces are less powerful, but still possess enough firepower and mobility to strike deep and achieve operational effects. However, unlike the OMG, operational maneuver by "desant" forces is accomplished in two phases involving initial delivery by an external transportation source, usually air, and subsequent mobility by organic means such as the BMD.(4) For both forces, successful employment is dependent upon control of their transportation medium which is either ground for the OMG or air for "desant" forces.

Naval superiority can also establish favorable sea conditions similar to this Soviet control of ground and air mediums. The probable sea control provided by the U.S. Navy and the availability of preconfigured "all-arms" Marine forces lead to a question of operational relevance. What is the feasibility of adapting the Soviet concepts of "desant" and the Operational Maneuver Group for amphibious application in future joint campaigns?

To answer this question, I will examine the theoretical background of Soviet deep battle and its resultant OMG and "desant" forces. Their ability to support current operational concepts will be determined through analysis of their capability to satisfy the tenets of AirLand Battle. Historical examples of deep operational maneuver with emphasis on amphibious forces will be analyzed to determine relative strengths or deficiencies. Next, U.S. Marine Corps force structure and doctrine will be compared to ascertain current capabilities or limitations to implementing such a concept in future campaigns. I will conclude with findings as to practical feasibility and implications for future application.

A Theoretical Foundation for Amphibious "Desant"

The formal development of the Soviet theory of operational maneuver or "deep battle" can be traced to studies of World War I combat conducted by General Mikhail N. Tukhachevskiy. He correctly noted that warfare had degenerated to static contact between belligerent armies along vastly extended lines which precluded assailable flanks for maneuver. Efforts to create a flank through penetration by overwhelming forces had generally proven futile. Attacks were predictably launched against narrow sectors by forces concentrated in echelon and were usually preceded by a lengthy artillery bombardment which forewarned the enemy and permitted him to rapidly transfer forces from other sectors to the threatened area.(5) Tukhachevskiy sought to prevent the development of these conditions by creating methods and forces to restore maneuver to the

battlefield. He sought to paralyze the enemy's flexible employment of operational reserves and conduct battles in depth to set conditions to achieve decisive defeat of the enemy.(6)

To accomplish these objectives, Tukhachevskiy and his colleague, V. K. Triandafillov, developed a concept of offensive action eventually identified by the Soviets as "deep battle." (7) This method of warfare began with a strong main attack along a sector of the front chosen in advance. The need for a strong force to penetrate the enemy's defenses demanded concentration at a preselected point with relegation of the remaining forces to diversionary attacks only. Once penetration had been achieved, an independent enveloping force would be launched cleanly through the breach in order to drive deep into the enemy's rear.(8) Composed of fast, reliable and long-range tanks, this "mechanized force" would seek to disrupt the enemy's command and control, pin down and isolate reserves, and generally prepare conditions whereby enemy elements could be defeated in detail.(9)

As configured by the Soviets in World War II, this "all-arms" force was primarily armored and motorized, and continually expanded in size and power by adding greater concentrations of tanks.(10) Its method of insertion was through a "heavy break-in" conducted in three phases. During the first phase, independent tank brigades and battalions would be assigned to all-arms and infantry formations to achieve a breakthrough. During the second phase, tanks and motorized corps were tasked to complete the penetration and provide flank security to a third phase "mobile group." (11) This latter element, Tukhachevskiy's and Triandafillov's "mechanized force", was

based on a predominantly tank or mechanized (but all-arms) corps. It was the equivalent of a modern tank or motorized rifle division. Mobile groups were perceived by the Soviets as the most effective means of turning tactical successes into operational successes and of achieving a high rate of advance to great depth. Mobile groups were also most valuable in achieving continuity of offensive action and limiting costly operational pauses which permit the enemy to recover. To these ends, they were tasked to accomplish a variety of missions including seizing key points such as bridgeheads within the enemy's lines of communications, pursuing forces attempting to withdraw, fighting enemy reserves, and breaking through secondary defensive lines.(12)

The dawn of the nuclear warfare age at the close of World War II resulted in the abandonment of the Soviet deep battle and mobile group concepts. The Soviet military establishment believed future major campaigns would be nuclear from the start and concepts for land operations were reshaped accordingly. The role of the mobile force was assumed by nuclear strikes which provided an advancing carpet behind which tank heavy forces would follow mopping up remaining enemy resistance.(13) However, by the mid-1960s the Soviet Army began moving away from reliance on battlefield nuclear weapons and developed a mobile force compact enough for maneuver within the constraints of time and space at the operational level, while powerful enough to produce operational results. Thus, drawing upon World War II experiences, the Soviets developed the "Operational Maneuver Group" (OMG) as we know it today.(14)

A powerful and highly mobile formation, OMGs doctrinally appear

to avoid combat and move rapidly toward specific objectives of up to 300 kilometers deep. These include bridges or other river crossing sites, transportation networks, airfields, and command and control centers.(15) Their seizure and the presence of a strong force in the enemy's rear, is expected to cause chaos and disorganization and limit his freedom of action and combat effectiveness.(16)

Foreseeing development and employment of an OMG-like force, Tukhachevskiy also recognized the conflicting relationship between time and space on its operations. He noted that "the greater the lapse of time between the beginning of an operation and its conclusion, the greater the number of countermeasures the enemy (could) put into effect."(17) Consequently, the question of how deep the force should penetrate assumed considerable importance. If too shallow, a perceptive enemy would be able to withdraw. Conversely, deeper penetrations required stronger forces which would be more vulnerable to the factor of time through increased exposure to an enemy response.(18)

These factors of time and space have been expanded by the late British general and deep battle proponent, Richard Simpkin. In explaining their practical application in modern warfare, he has used the physics concept of leverage. There are three key components to this idea: mass, which corresponds to the enemy force; length, which relates to the distance, or depth, that must be attained to move or effectively "turn" an enemy; and time.(19) As noted by Tukhachevskiy, a turning movement requires a holding force and a mobile force.(20) According to Simpkin, the holding force, or "base" for leverage, clears a passage through the enemy's tactical

depth to enable the mobile force to penetrate and break through cleanly. This penetration becomes a "hinge" or the fulcrum of the lever for a turning movement. As the holding force "contains" the defender's mass forward along the line of contact, success of the turning movement becomes dependent upon the length or "depth" of the penetration.(21)

Simpkin noted that this depth is effected by two conditions. First, for the enemy mass to be turned, at a minimum its center must lie within a triangle formed by the two ends of the lever arm (the mobile force and the penetration point) and the other extremity (the holding force). If this condition is not met, the enemy will retain enough freedom of action to counterturn the holding force and defeat it in detail. He can also shift sideways to establish a more tenable defense.(22) Second, the distance traveled by the mobile force must not be so deep as to cause it to become overextended. If this occurred, the enemy could strike the rear of the mobile force and "lift it off its hinge."(23)

Simpkin allowed for these conditions by proposing a two element or "complex" mobile force. Initially, this force would move forward through the penetration as one group. However, once the minimum depth for the exercise of leverage was reached, the leading element becomes dedicated to the retention of forward motion. Concurrently, the second element provides all possible support including the blocking of enemy counter-moves and the launching of raiding parties against secondary objectives along the flanks of the route of advance. Once minimum leverage depth is reached, the follow-up element establishes a corridor in depth, an "advanced hinge", for the lead element.(24)

Simpkin complements Tukhachevskiy, who believed the mobile force should be large enough to accomplish the mission and provide its own protection. Tukhachevskiy also noted that it should be possible with even limited forces to disrupt an enemy's cohesion. He asserted that the actual strength of the operational maneuver force would in no small part derive from the effects of its insertion into areas where it was known beforehand that the enemy would be weak. Thus, he believed a relatively small unit provided with a proper mix of firepower and mobility and delivered to the right place at the right time, could achieve significant results which would have operational implications.(25)

The potential value of smaller but well-balanced all-arms forces deep into the enemy's rear presented Tukhachevskiy with a second solution to the challenges of the World War I battlefield. Exploiting emerging and projected technologies, he foresaw the utility of airborne assault forces which could conduct landings throughout the areas separating corps, army, and army groups from reserves.(26) This vision of an air-delivered strike force capable of operational maneuver is strongly reflected in the Soviet concept of "desant." By their interpretation, "desant" described the arrival in enemy or unsecured territory of any force in any direction other than the shortest straight-line from the point of departure and/or by any means other than its own power.(27) Delivery and employment of "desant" forces also supported the theoretical concept of the indirect approach. (Consistent with current U.S. doctrine, the "desant" force is delivered in a manner which promotes preservation of its combat strength for subsequent actions.)(28)

While initial force preservation was vital, Tukhachevskiy recognized deep maneuver forces would by definition be weaker than those the enemy could potentially employ against it. Thus, he determined that maneuver forces must enjoy either "moral surprise" (the enemy unaware of its delivery) or "material surprise" (the enemy unable to respond in time).(29) He observed that "desant" force weakness generally was a lack of mobility once separated from the original delivery medium. As an example, airborne forces depart their transports and become foot-mobile infantry with a corresponding reduction in mobility (and firepower) when compared to mechanized forces.(30)

Tukhachevskiy's theoretical solution to these mobility and firepower problems of "desant" involved adoption of all-arms and "mechanized" airborne forces organized to operate independent of the main force. By the 1960s, technology provided the Soviets with the means to accomplish this. Described as "kinestatic troops," these forces would require a high degree of maneuverability and should possess all types of weapons, equipment, and materiel necessary for long range operations. By recognizing that the landing was simply the beginning of "desant" operations, the Soviets provided for "secondary mobility" and improved firepower through introduction of the ASU-57 and subsequent ASU-85 assault guns, and the BMD airborne combat vehicle. Potential missions assigned these forces included capturing enemy nuclear weapons systems, seizing bridgeheads and river crossing sites, securing mountain passes and defiles, and annihilating strategic objectives otherwise resistant to attack.(31) By achieving moral or material surprise as well as possessing added

mobility beyond the initial airborne insertion, an all-arms "desant" force could attain objectives similar to those intended for OMGs.

The Soviet concept of "desant" has not stagnated. While current air-assault "desant" forces have been drawn from existing airborne divisions, a parallel Soviet effort has been ongoing since the early 1980s to incorporate "desant" into amphibious operations. Primarily intended for tactical missions, these specially designated and trained units of naval infantry (marines) would support the larger amphibious operation by attacking key coastal targets or conducting raids to disrupt an enemy's cohesive defenses. Postulated as battalion-sized units, these amphibious forces appear to be trained in methods of insertion other than by helicopter, including hovercraft and parachute delivery.(32)

An earlier historical linkage between contemporary "desant" and amphibious application is found in the works of Jomini. In The Art of War, he asserted that it was impossible for an enemy to cover every point without overextending his assets, and that amphibious forces could achieve "strategically" significant results when employed at a distance from the mass of the enemy's forces.(33) Likewise conforming to B.H. Liddell Hart's conceptual intent for the indirect approach, this amphibious method of "desant" would seek to avoid the enemy's strength, strike through a vulnerability and ultimately dislocate the enemy's mind and dispositions.(34) The question remains that while the "desant" concept has this historical amphibious precedent, can it be translated for application by modern amphibious forces to provide operationally significant results?

Amphibious "desant", aside from being able to accomplish

missions similar to those of ground delivered OMGs, also employs comparable methods. As a substitute for the broad front, heavy "break-in" battle, Soviets developed a less direct method termed the "slashing attack." Rather than launch a massive and expensive effort to force a penetration, a slashing attack could pass through a gap or down an enemy boundary and turn in diagonally along the rear boundary of a division or corps. By this turning movement conducted along a weak enemy flank and coupled with adequate screening, a "slashing force" would open a corridor for an OMG or could itself assume a deep maneuver role and push on towards an operational objective.(35) Similarly, amphibious deep maneuver or "desant" could take advantage of a vulnerability such as an exposed "boundary" presented by either the enemy's lack of naval power or friendly superiority of the same. Thus, an amphibious turning movement would be analogous to the Soviet "continental" slashing attack.

The exposed boundary subjected to this form of slashing attack is the "sea flank." If the enemy is incapable of adequately securing the seaward access to his rear, he has in fact exposed a "flank" for exploitation. The enemy may seek to anchor his forces along the sea; however, if he lacks the maritime superiority to adequately secure it, a more capable adversary may exploit it. Far from being an obstacle or restraint to maneuver, this sea flank provides an excellent vulnerability for attack by a suitably configured and supported amphibious force. Thus, freedom of maneuver is produced by maritime superiority, and execution of amphibious "desant" is possible.

Like the slashing attack, Simpkin's description of a "complex" mobile force is directly applicable to the concept of amphibious desant. His solution to the potential threat of an operational maneuver force becoming overextended and counter-enveloped by the enemy involved employment of a two-part or "complex" mobile force that would establish an "advanced hinge" to permit a secure and sustained turning movement. He further compared this advanced hinge to Alfred Thayer Mahan's concept of the advanced naval base.(36) Just as the latter established a "pivot" for mobile operations by some or all of a fleet, a modern amphibious force composed of both naval transports, support ships, and aircraft may constitute a sea-based "advance hinge" for the conduct of operational maneuver by embarked amphibious forces. Hence, a complex amphibious mobile force could move forward as a self-contained element, establish a mobile seabase as an advanced hinge, and launch operational maneuver forces ashore deep into the enemy's rear without maintaining contact with the original "holding force" or main army.

An amphibious force can remain as an offshore threat indefinitely with refueling and resupply conducted on station. This unconstrained capability presents an operational commander with the opportunity to "preempt" a potential enemy. According to Simpkin, preemption "...is a positive act calculated to produce enough leverage in the form of a sufficient and suitably located mobile threat to force the enemy into submission or inhibit him from taking the action he apparently intends."(37) This threat is presented by two intrinsic characteristics of the mobile force. Simpkin terms the first "potential energy", the ability to convey firepower. The

second characteristic is "potential momentum" or the capability for further movement provided by self-sustainment.(38) Consequently, just the presence of a suitably powerful amphibious "desant" force, before or after hostilities have commenced, presents an enemy with the dilemma of either spreading his defenses against all possible landing points or ignoring the threat and accepting the risk of having his defenses turned.

Do these concepts of operational maneuver and "desant" provide the operational commander a means of achieving the tenets of AirLand Battle? In other words, would the combined concepts provide a force commander with enhanced means to exercise initiative, operate with agility, effectively exploit depth to operational advantage, and incorporate the efficient synchronization of both his actions and his combat forces?

Operational maneuver by forces employing various methods of "desant" is a direct manifestation of initiative. Both concepts represent force oriented approaches. By exploiting weaknesses in enemy dispositions and striking deep in his operational rear, these forces can create threatening conditions which cannot be ignored by the enemy commander. With destruction of the enemy army as the operational commander's principal objective, operational maneuver provides a powerful contribution by attacking the enemy's command cohesion and will.

By blocking his lines of communications and/or destroying his facilities, the enemy is presented with a dilemma which he must resolve: should he continue his present course of action or turn to eliminate the threat to his rear? Therefore, by being forced to

react, the enemy commander surrenders agility and consequently the ability to exercise initiative. Additionally, the shock presented by a substantial force in the rear area exerts a blow to the enemy force's corporate morale. Together, these unanticipated pressures enable a commander to change the terms of battle, force the enemy off balance and ultimately eliminate the enemy's freedom of action. The purposes of both initiative and "desant" are significantly similar: "to achieve chaos and disorganization, and to limit the freedom of manoeuver and the effectiveness of enemy action."(39)

The resulting chaos, disorganization and immobility are direct products of the enemy's loss of tactical and operational agility. These conditions introduce inertia into the enemy's decision making process and reduce his ability to recover. They also expose additional vulnerabilities for friendly exploitation. As the enemy strives to regain cohesion, the commander is able to increase the tempo of his own activities, concentrate his own strengths, and take advantage of transient opportunities. Operational maneuver provides a method to increase the friction confronting an enemy and thus improve the retention of agility at the enemy's expense.

The concepts of operational maneuver and agility are mutually supporting. Operational maneuver may enhance agility, but it is also dependent upon agility for success. As may be inferred from preceding descriptions, operational maneuver and "desant" must be executed by forces capable of independent action within a commander's overall intent. Operations deep within an enemy's rear and beyond the range of immediate support by the main force require both mental and physical flexibility. As inherently less powerful

forces than those potentially available to the enemy, "desant" forces can expect considerable friction. Thus, decisiveness, risk-taking, and a prescience for changing circumstances and resulting opportunities must be characteristic of forces attacking into the enemy's operational depth.

Attacking into the enemy's operational depth is consistent with the purpose of disrupting the enemy's ability to exercise initiative. Deep operational maneuver forces seek to interdict enemy reserves and to paralyze the enemy's command and control system thereby degrading his freedom of action. Capitalizing on inherent mobility and firepower, a "desant" force must extend operations in space and time by creating conditions which force the enemy to fight on unfavorable terms. Thus, the mission of "desant" forces is, in fact, depth. By creating conditions which present the enemy with an increasing number of decisions under increasing time constraints, a friendly commander's freedom of action is enhanced as momentum is derived and retained.

Securing essential benefits of mobility and firepower and achieving favorable results offered by deep operational maneuver depend upon the successful synchronization of both diverse battlefield activities and a variety of combat capabilities. As reflected in Simpkin's concept of leverage, use of an operational maneuver or "mobile" force reflects a dynamic and interdependent relationship of two elements (a "holding force" and a "mobile force") in time, space, and purpose. The holding force pins the preponderance of the enemy's mass while creating the gap or hinge enabling the mobile force to simultaneously execute its penetration

into the enemy's operational depth. As the holding force's interdiction of the enemy's main body permits the mobile force to maneuver in depth, subsequent actions of the mobile force create conditions conducive to the holding force's final destruction of the enemy. Synchronization of these mutually-supporting activities in time is of paramount importance. Determination of the enemy's "window of vulnerability" is critical in the successful employment of operational maneuver forces.(40)

Just as the activities of holding and mobile forces require synchronization for success, the components of these forces also require synchronization. This is particularly so with the mobile force. As posited by Tukhachevskiy and Triandafillov, this force should include "all-arms" and be capable of independent operations. In this regard, the 1936 Soviet field regulations (PU-36) states that "each arm should be employed in close cooperation with other arms, under conditions affording the best possible exploitation of all its capabilities."(41) These concepts express the essence of synchronization and are amply reflected in the Soviet's historically consistent composition of "desant" forces.

Although relatively few in number, historical examples of amphibious deep maneuvers, albeit with mixed results, may be recognized in the wars of the Twentieth Century. The following section will examine two historical operations and will be used to draw inferences as to the validity of Soviet theory and to identify lessons which may prove beneficial to future application by modern amphibious forces.

Correlating History with Theory

On 22 January 1944, an amphibious force was launched against the west coast of Italy intent upon relieving the stalemate imposed by German defenders after the Allies landed on the peninsula four months before. Since landing on the "toe" directly adjacent to Sicily, Allied forces had failed to achieve the rapid advance and destruction of German forces envisioned during planning. The German center of gravity in Italy was the Tenth Army which was composed of only seven divisions and tasked with the defense of the southern and central regions of the peninsula. Its commander, Field Marshal Albert Kesselring benefited from a strong central position, mountainous terrain, and secure lines of communications. Consequently, advances by the Allied 15th Army Group were continually checked. In four months the Army Group had advanced only 70 miles.(42)

To relieve this impasse and regain the initiative, an amphibious landing codenamed "Operation Shingle" was planned to insert a corps-size force at Anzio, approximately 30 miles south of Rome. Anzio was a decisive point for two reasons: first, it was almost equal distance between the main German defensive lines and the Italian capital of Rome. Second, it provided access to the Alban Hills, a dominating complex of ridges lying astride the two principle highways comprising the Tenth Army's lines of communications. Once ashore, the amphibious force was to strike northeast and seize the Alban Hills.(43) According to General Sir Harold R.L.G. Alexander, commander of the Allied 15th Army Group,

the intent of this maneuver was "...to cut the enemy's main communications in the Colli Laziali (Alban Hills) area southeast of Rome and to threaten the German rear." Following disruption of the German LOCs, it was assumed the enemy would be forced to abandon his "Gustav Line" defenses and the U.S. Fifth Army would be able to drive forward and linkup with the amphibious force within seven days.(44)

To this end, the U.S. VI Corps, commanded by Major General John P. Lucas, was designated for the landing. From the start, this force was beset with problems which frustrated planning and confidence in the operation. First, assets provided to General Lucas were limited. For Operation Shingle, VI Corps included 2 infantry divisions, a parachute regiment, a separate parachute battalion, a ranger force of three battalions, and two British commando battalions formed into a "special service brigade." With these units, General Lucas was expected to secure a beachhead for sustainment, drive 20 miles inland, seize a hill complex over 10 miles long, and establish adequate defenses until Fifth Army could breakthrough the German defenses and rapidly linkup.(45) However, by drawing this "mobile force" from General Mark Clark's Fifth Army, the Army was correspondingly weakened and restricted in its ability to ultimately achieve the linkup.

The second problem involved the availability of amphibious ships. By January 1944, the final marshaling of shipping for landings at Normandy and Southern France, Operations Overlord and Anvil respectively, was nearing completion. Landing Ship (Tanks), or LSTs were in short supply throughout the European and

Mediterranean theaters, and the Anzio operation would represent an expenditure of questionable value. The LSTs were eventually provided, although at the cost of postponing Operation Anvil.(46)

The most critical problem however involved the actual mission of the amphibious force. Despite General Alexander's intent, orders provided General Lucas by General Clark were of a different character. According to General Clark, the amphibious force was to "seize and secure a beachhead in the vicinity of Anzio and...advance on the Colli Laziali (Alban Hills)."(47) However, his G-3, Brigadier General Donald W. Brann, verbally clarified the commander's intent that the primary mission was the holding of a beachhead. Two reasons have been cited for the variance between directives. First, General Clark was concerned, justifiably so as events unfolded, by the risk General Lucas would assume by "over-extending" his forces 20 miles, from the beachhead to the Alban Hills. Second, his intelligence officers were convinced that the mere landing alone would so threaten the Germans that they would react and meet it with all available resources. Therefore, seizure of the Alban Hills and disruption of Highways 6 and 7 would be unnecessary.(48)

Both reasons reflect two key, and ultimately erroneous, assumptions. First, a relatively small force placed in their rear would compel the Germans to abandon their defenses.(49) Second, that Fifth Army would be able to rapidly exploit the expected vulnerability and complete a linkup. Neither assumption reflected an appreciation for the German's record of tenacious defense as demonstrated in Sicily. Even if VI Corps had been able to secure

the Alban Hills and cut Highways 6 and 7, Highway 5 was still available farther to the east for support or withdrawal. Similarly, the German's ability to exploit interior lines and rapidly shift forces to meet an attack was completely discounted.(50)

The Germans appreciated their vulnerability to a flanking attack from the sea. Due to the overwhelming concentration of enemy forces facing the Fifth Army, Kesselring's chief of staff, Generalmajor Siegfried Westphal, claimed that on D-Day the allies could have pushed from Anzio all the way to Rome.(51) Nonetheless, although VI Corps achieved complete surprise and suffered few casualties, the Corps lacked the strength to push inland. Farsighted planning by Kesselring and aggressive execution by subordinates enabled German reinforcements to arrive and isolate the area by 1700 on D-Day. The weakened Fifth Army was unable to force the Gustav Line, and VI Corps became isolated and a drain on scarce personnel and logistics for an additional four months.(52)

Anzio represented a bold attempt to gain and retain the initiative. The basic concept was sound and even the Germans noted the opportunities presented the Allies by both surprise and the indirect approach. Since the Germans lacked sufficient naval resources to counter the Allies in the theater, both their "sea flanks" were uncovered. By exploiting naval superiority and amphibious power projection, the Allies attempted to utilize all available capabilities to replace a static situation with conditions which would permit the most effective use of forces. However, a lack of sufficient forces to create adequate holding and mobile elements, and a failure to synchronize their separate efforts,

resulted in unsound risk that doomed Operation Shingle from the start.(53)

Although the operation conceptually met the spirit of agility, the force allocation and contradictory mission guidance failed to reflect this tenet. The amphibious delivery capability offered the Allies the means to act faster than the enemy and exploit an unquestionable vulnerability. However, the transfer of some Fifth Army forces to reinforce VI Corps proved a significant factor in the ultimate outcome of the campaign.(54) Once forces were ashore, the beachhead was developed as planned, based on erroneous assumptions of German reactions. Allied force limitations negated a transient opportunity for exploitation and enabled the enemy to concentrate counterforces to reassert dominance on the battlefield.

Both General Alexander's and General Clark's intents for Operation Shingle reflected an intuitive appreciation for the tenet of depth. Each sought to extend the battlefield in time and space by forcing an untenable situation on the enemy. By blocking the enemy's principal lines of communications well behind the bulk of his forces, the deep maneuver of VI Corps was to force him to react and deprive him of freedom of action. Reserves needed elsewhere would either be interdicted or diverted to suppress the landing. Further, the threat presented to the German forces in southern Italy would hopefully lead to dislocation of the Gustav Line and allow subsequent maneuver by Fifth Army. However, the objective was the development of a sufficient threat to create an untenable condition for the German defenders. In keeping with Soviet deep battle theory, such an operation requires adequate leverage.

The premise that a beachhead alone would create the necessary threat failed to meet this leverage requirement. Similarly, seizure of the Alban Hills with the forces available would still have left the Germans Route 5, and would have created a condition analogous to the over-extended lever, with VI Corps vulnerable to being cut-off and destroyed. Indeed, only General Lucas' careful defensive measures at the beachhead prevented its annihilation.(55) Unfortunately, exploitation of depth alone could not compensate for these deficiencies in planning, intelligence, and leadership.

As with agility, the advantages accrued through effective synchronization of tactical actions were negated by the establishment of a secure beachhead at the expense of rapidly disrupting the enemy's LOCs and forcing abandonment of the German defenses. Once committed, VI Corps was constrained to a conservative course of action that prevented exploitation. Planning guidance allowed General Lucas to strike out and seize the Alban Hills if conditions permitted.(56) Yet forces available precluded such favorable circumstances. One must place the onus for this deficiency on General Alexander who, as the commander responsible for coordinating activities of both VI Corps and the parent Fifth Army, limited the potential for success by his lack of direct involvement.(57)

Provided sufficient forces and executed with audacity, Operation Shingle could have achieved its original purpose. However, it was a task requiring a full army to succeed and, as noted by Samuel Eliot Morison, "to attempt it with only two divisions was to send a boy to do a man's job."(58) Given an

army-size force with a capability to interdict Route 5 in addition to the Alban Hills, it could have presented a truly credible threat and forced a German withdrawal from the Gustav Line. However, effective synchronization was not achieved. By splitting his forces in such a way as to prohibit mutual support, Alexander provided a weak "holding force" and exposed his "mobile force" to destruction in detail.(59)

Anzio provides an important lesson for consideration in adopting an amphibious "desant" concept. There is an absolute necessity for accurate intelligence. All other problems which may be recognized in the planning and conduct of Operation Shingle resulted from mistaken assumptions based on a lack of appreciation for the enemy, his capabilities, and operational tendencies. Despite ample experience with German tactics, the mistaken belief that a beachhead alone would force abandonment of his defenses hindered the opportunities for significant results from the start. Further, lack of appreciation for the German's ability to rapidly reinforce Italy from other garrisons in the theater was a major deficiency which permitted Field Marshal Kesselring to expediently contain VI Corps while continuing to deny maneuverability to Fifth Army. These assumptions also resulted in the divergence of commanders' intents. While General Alexander's was most realistic in conceiving a situation untenable to the Germans, General Clark's was most realistic in recognizing the limitations of available resources. However, neither adequately matched the means to achieve desired ends, and the "desant" attempt failed accordingly.

Like the Allies in Italy, United Nations forces fighting in

Korea in 1950 were faced with a static battlefield deprived of operational maneuver on the ground. On 25 June 1950, following numerous border incidents, the North Korean Peoples' Army (NKPA) invaded South Korea. North Korea assumed that the United States would vacillate before committing combat forces to counter an attack and that it would be possible for the NKPA to destroy the South Korean army, subdue the country before reaching its culminating point, and present a "fait accompli" before effective reinforcements could arrive. In the event, complete surprise was achieved and by 28 June Seoul was captured. Despite a hastily composed resistance, by mid-August the NKPA had pushed United Nations forces into a small perimeter around the city of Pusan, on the southeastern corner of the peninsula. However, even though the North Koreans had fought well and remained strong, by August their flanks and rear were totally exposed.(60)

As Supreme Commander Allied Powers, General Douglas MacArthur was tasked to introduce forces into South Korea and restore the political integrity of the country. Limitations imposed by post-World War II demobilization of U.S. armed forces compelled him to initially conduct a defensive strategy.(61) Nevertheless, recognizing the NKPA as the enemy's true center of gravity and appreciating the opportunity presented by extended lines of communications, MacArthur resolved to conduct a deep amphibious turning movement to separate the NKPA from its sustainment and introduce a serious threat to its rear. As early as 9 July, his stated intent was to "land (at Inchon), cut the North Korean army off from their logistical support, and cause their withdrawal and annihilation."(62)

The actual target, or decisive point, was the South Korean capital of Seoul; as the capital's port, Inchon presented the closest, though not the best, available landing site. This area was decisive for several reasons. First, the major lines of communications from North Korea to the NKPA's units on the Nakdong River passed through Seoul. Second, Seoul served as a major marshaling center for NKPA supplies and replacement personnel. Third, the nearby Kimpo airfield provided the only facilities capable of handling large transport aircraft. Fourth, as capital of South Korea, the retaking of Seoul would have immense strategic significance.(63)

Employment of this seaborne method of the indirect approach required creation of a holding force and a mobile force. For the former, the currently engaged Eighth Army at Pusan would suffice. However, for the mobile force MacArthur recognized the need for combat ready units already adept at amphibious assault. Available Army forces and training time were insufficient to permit execution before tidal conditions would preclude amphibious operations. He therefore requested and was eventually provided the First Marine Division and its supporting air wing. The Marines were combined with the U.S. 7th Infantry Division to form the amphibious mobile force, the X Corps.(64) Additional support was predominantly supplied by the Navy. Since ground-based aircraft would be too far from Inchon to provide sufficient loiter time, one British and four American aircraft carriers would meet air support requirements. The battleship Missouri and other surface vessels would also conduct diversionary bombardments to draw the enemy's attention from

Inchon.(65)

Coming ashore on 15 September, X Corps achieved absolute surprise and secured all initial objectives in the beachhead area by the end of D-Day at a cost of 21 killed and 175 wounded. Continuing immediately to drive for Seoul, Kimpo airfield was secured on the 19th.(66) Despite the unexpected stiffening of enemy resistance at Seoul provided by an NKPA division in transit to the Nakdong, the capital was secured by the 28th.(67)

Initially, the NKPA at the Nakdong River gave no indication of being aware of the threat to their LOCs or of any intent to abandon its offensive. However, by 24 September, the NKPA began to feel the effects of their severed lines of communications and the presence of X Corps 170 miles in their rear. Experiencing food and ammunition shortages and a lack of needed replacements, the North Koreans began an orderly withdrawal northward. Coincidentally, Eighth Army launched its massive breakout attack which struck the NKPA and turned the latter's withdrawal into a rout. All organized resistance was rapidly destroyed and on the 26th a linkup was effected near Osan between elements of the X Corps and Eighth Army.(68)

The landing at Inchon and subsequent seizure of Seoul provide ample illustrations of the correct application of AirLand Battle tenets. As stated in FM 100-5, "in the defensive, initiative implies quickly turning the tables on the attacker."(69) Although his forces had been continually on the defensive against an unrelenting enemy, MacArthur was able to regain the initiative through a combination of surprise and audacity. General Almond,

commander of X Corps, noted of Inchon that "because it was the worst place to bring an amphibious assault, it was also...the best possible."(70) Thus "moral" and "material" surprise were achieved, and enhanced further by the deception efforts provided by the Navy. MacArthur recognized that risk was still involved. However, his acceptance of risk reflected a sound appreciation for the enemy's situation and the capabilities of amphibious forces when supported by maritime superiority.

With the X Corps, MacArthur created a separate mobile force which was strong, well-balanced and capable of meeting the challenges of amphibious assault and independent operations. The agility this command was able to achieve proved critical in the attack on Seoul. As mentioned above, considerable friction was introduced into this phase of the operation by the presence of an unexpected NKPA division. Nonetheless, X Corps was able to concentrate its flexible forces and was able to achieve the needed coordination to seize the capital.

MacArthur was also able to act faster than the North Koreans through his choice of the indirect approach. He noted that the alternative, reinforcing Eighth Army and conducting a frontal assault against the NKPA, would "only result in a protracted and expensive campaign."(71) By rapidly and unexpectedly concentrating strength against an enemy vulnerability, X Corps utilized maneuver to disrupt the enemy's cohesion and regain the initiative.

MacArthur's commitment of X Corps exploited the security provided by absolute control of the sea. He was thus able to position and maneuver it in depth to administer a decisive blow

against the North Koreans. As a tenet, depth may also be recognized in the holding, or "containment", of the main NKPA forces at the Naktong by Eighth Army. The seizure of Seoul projected combat power "deep into the enemy's vulnerable areas." (72) The enemy's freedom of action was degraded and the NKPA was ultimately compelled to conform to MacArthur's intent. Depth may be further perceived in MacArthur's vision. At the outset of hostilities he saw the conditions for future success. While he had to meet the needs of the current situation, he nevertheless focused thought and resources towards creating circumstances for the enemy's eventual dislocation at Inchon.

MacArthur used the situation created by the Pusan perimeter to develop an operational synchronization of forces and events that successfully destroyed the North Korean army. While some question exists over whether he viewed Inchon as a supporting attack and Eighth Army's breakout at Pusan as a main attack, there is little disagreement that the physical destruction of the NKPA could only be accomplished by both in concert. Eighth Army's defense along the Naktong River attracted the bulk of North Korea's forces well forward. Forcing the North Koreans to maintain long and tenuous lines of communications exposed a vulnerability for decisive attack by X Corps. Actions by both forces were synchronized in purpose as well. X Corps attacked the cybernetic and moral aspects of the NKPA. The enemy's decision making cohesion was disrupted by the demoralizing effect of a strong threat in the rear. Eighth Army concentrated on destruction of the enemy. Together, these synchronized operations were successful in totally destroying the NKPA.

A synthesis of theoretical and historical analyses identifies several salient points concerning successful deep maneuver through amphibious "desant." First, operationally significant results require a strong all-arms force. Similar to an OMG, it must possess sufficient firepower, mobility, and self-sustainment to permit operations independent of direct support from the main force. To this end, a "complex" mobile force can be constituted by a ground combat element, delivered and protected by a naval support element. Self-sustainment can also be accomplished through this same association, using either helicopters or amphibious shipping. Following insertion, the ground combat element must still possess sufficient organic mobility and firepower to permit rapid movement inland and exploitation of the enemy's vulnerability. This argues against "ad hoc" formations such as mechanized infantry units picked up and deposited by a medium helicopter squadron with no subsequent means of mobility other than the soldiers' feet.(73)

Amphibious "desant" forces must also capitalize on surprise and deception to achieve "penetration" and reach the enemy's operational rear. Expenditure of resources to force the enemy's defenses would be counterproductive and could lead to a premature reaction from the enemy. Ultimately, success depends upon an accurate appraisal of the enemy. Correct intelligence and interpretation are essential to ensure that the time and location of the "desant" exploit an enemy's weakness, and are sufficient to permit the leverage necessary to force a desired reaction.

Employment of deep maneuver is a dynamic process conducted by two mutually-supporting elements. Although an amphibious OMG, or

mobile force, would be structured to operate independently, its success would still be contingent upon simultaneous action by the main or holding force. Through application of leverage, the mobile force creates a credible threat that intimidates the enemy and compels a reaction which prepares conditions favorable to future exploitation by the holding force. By utilizing an amphibious "complex mobile force" incorporating naval and ground assault forces, adequate depth for leverage may be achieved. Likewise, by "containing" the enemy forward to support the penetration, conducting a subsequent link-up with the "desant" force, or acting as a "hammer" against the mobile force's "anvil", the main or holding force creates conditions supporting the use of deep maneuver.

Finally, successful deep maneuver requires a system of command and control that will permit the maneuvering commander sufficient flexibility to accomplish the operational intent. Since his mission is to disrupt enemy cohesion and prepare conditions conducive to the enemy's future destruction, the commander must enjoy freedom to act on transient opportunities or enemy weaknesses and should not be subjected to restrictive taskings or directives.

Both theory and history suggest that as a concept amphibious "desant" is feasible. But can it be executed by forces currently available to a theater CINC or joint force commander? The following section is an analysis of contemporary amphibious capabilities, including forces and employment doctrine presented to determine practical feasibility, deficiencies between capabilities and requirements, and implications for future application.

The Marine Air-Ground Task Force as an OMG

The current combat organization of the Marine Corps offers the United States a nucleus for adopting an amphibious variant of the Soviet concepts of the Operational Maneuver Group and "desant." Marine combat forces are formed into task-organized commands termed Marine Air-Ground Task Forces, or MAGTFs. Each MAGTF is a integrated combined-arms (all-arms) force comprised of four major sub-elements: a command and control organization, a ground combat element or GCE, an air combat element (ACE) and a combat service support element (CSSE). Together, these components provide the commander a force of balanced combat capabilities together with the means for self-sustainment for a specific period of time.

There are three sizes of MAGTFs, all of which may be tailored for specific situations. The smallest, the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) is a relatively light force, normally built around a reinforced rifle battalion. As such it does not usually conduct amphibious assaults, although it might serve as a raiding force or as the forward element of a larger MAGTF. The next larger MAGTF, the Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB), is capable of amphibious assaults and subsequent combat operations ashore. Comprising a reinforced rifle regiment and a "composite" Marine Aircraft Group with both helicopters and fixed wing aircraft, the MEB includes approximately 16,000 personnel and sustainment sufficient for up to 30 days of independent operations. The largest MAGTF is the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF). Composed of one or more Marine Divisions and Air Wings with appropriate combat service support, it is capable of 60 days of self-sustained combat.(74)

Complementing the above MAGTF organizations are Maritime Prepositioning Forces (MPFs). These are comprised of a command element, a MEB, an "MPS" squadron loaded with most of the MEB's combat equipment and 30 days of supplies, and a Navy support element. This concept provides the Marines with a responsive capability unparalleled except for U.S. Army forces in Europe. A 16,500 man, armor-heavy (53 tanks) fighting force can be deployed across vast distances, offloaded, assembled and be prepared for combat in a few days. MPFs triple a fleet commander's ability to employ Marine forces and does so at a minimal cost in terms of strategic lift assets. As with Army forces, their principal limitation includes the lack of an amphibious assault capability resulting in a requirement for a benign environment with sufficient time to offload equipment and complete force constitution.(75)

The proliferation of sophisticated technology, even in the Third World, has made it essential that future amphibious assaults be launched from "over-the-horizon." To accomplish this method of power projection, new amphibious delivery systems have been devised. The most important of which are the Landing Craft Air Cushioned (LCAC) and the MV-22 "Osprey" tilt-rotor aircraft. Without unnecessarily describing their individual attributes, their combined application would expose up to 73 percent of the world's coastlines to amphibious "desant" vice a previously vulnerable 17 percent.(76) Additionally, while former amphibious operations concentrated the landing force against a single point and developed a beachhead before expanding inland, under the OTH concept the landing force would be introduced over multiple "thrust" points to strike

immediately inland to retain the operational initiative. This also mirrors a contemporary Soviet view of OMG employment, which for logistic and concealment reasons would most likely penetrate along several axes and would only coalesce within the enemy's depth.(77)

Together with its transportation and support shipping (the latter including naval gunfire platforms, supply ships and aircraft carriers) a MAGTF constitutes an Amphibious Ready Group (ARG). A direct correlation can be established between the ARG and the complex mobile force proposed by Simpkin and epitomized in continental warfare by the OMG. Initially moving together to descend on the landing areas, the MAGTF ("forward element") will concentrate on "moving forward" or driving ashore and inland. Having securely delivered the MAGTF to the minimum depth for leverage against the enemy (the latter's operational rear) the naval component ("second element") will "go firm" and provide the "advanced hinge" for the MAGTF's continuing operations.

In keeping with the concept of "desant", this advanced hinge imposes no constraints on the main ground combat, or holding element, which will be engaging the preponderance of enemy forces. By employing an indirect approach aided by maritime superiority, a weakly defended sea flank and a technologically supported deep initial penetration, the ARG can adhere to Tukhachevskiy's observation that best results could be achieved when the mobile force was free from expending power by fighting its way through the enemy's defenses. An added similarity between the OTH MAGTF and Tukhachevskiy's vision for an OMG is the capability to employ small raid forces or "temporary assault landings", to create chaos and

deceive the enemy concerning the actual "point" of employment, and further prevent the flexible employment of reserves.(78) However, unlike a purely ground-based OMG, the MAGTF can be withdrawn after disrupting the enemy's cohesion, and can be retained for further "desant" as the situation requires.

In both transiting ashore and conducting subsequent ground combat operations, the Marine Corps has adopted a philosophy which could be adapted to create an employment doctrine conforming to Tukhachevskiy's vision of a deep maneuver force capable of acting independently to develop an operationally significant condition. Avoiding a terrain orientation, an OMG or "desant" force would seek through deep maneuver to shake the enemy's confidence in himself, prevent the concentrated application of his available manpower, and prepare favorable conditions for more decisive encounters.(79) Unlike the popular stereotype of the rigid Soviet commander, this method of operation would demand flexible leadership, alert to opportunities and capable of exercising immediate and autonomous action.

The Marine Corps' adoption of maneuver warfare as a foundation for its doctrine promotes the same quality. Over-the-horizon assault and a maneuver warfare doctrine could enable a MAGTF commander to similarly confront the enemy with a dilemma. By exploiting the vulnerability provided by a relatively unprotected littoral, a MAGTF could either drive ashore and deep into the enemy's rear to disrupt his LOCs and supporting infrastructure, or remain offshore, and by a threatening presence, keep the enemy guessing as to future employment. Either option would force the

enemy into the Clausewitzian problem of concentrating forces or thinning them to cover an extended area.(80) However, execution requires commanders who are willing and permitted to assume risks, and are capable of recognizing and taking advantage of transient situations.

Despite the above capabilities, some deficiencies require correction in order to permit a MAGTF to operate as an amphibious OMC. These include materiel characteristics which are inconsistent with requirements for a rapid, highly maneuverable "desant" force, a continuing and chronic shortage of needed amphibious shipping, and a doctrine which promotes both an amphibious contribution to joint operations and reflects an appreciation for the operational level of war.

Predominant materiel deficiencies are in the areas of armor, infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs), artillery, and airlift systems. In the early 1980's, the Marine Corps embarked upon a modernization process which has resulted in a "heavying-up" of ground combat systems, particularly in armor and artillery as represented by the M1A1 tank and the M198 howitzer. While both are technically superior systems, their adoption has increasingly taxed the capabilities of available amphibious transportation, both to the theater and to the beach and, especially with the M198, have limited ground mobility ashore. Unlike Soviet systems compatible with "desant", the M1A1 cannot be transported by helicopter and the M198 towed artillery weapon is for all practical purposes immobile once delivered by air. Similarly, the LVTP-7 amphibious tractor (AMTRAC) lacks the armor to constitute a true infantry fighting vehicle and

unlike the Soviet BMD, it is not transportable by air. For Soviet-style "desant", these systems require replacement by lighter and more mobile resources.

Closely linked to this materiel problem is transportation for the "desant" force. Currently, the Navy possesses enough amphibious shipping to deliver the assault elements of one MEF and one MEB to a theater.(81) This represents the Navy's entire amphibious lift capability for world-wide contingencies. Since this includes ships undergoing repairs and service-life extension activities, it is doubtful that a conflict short of general war would result in their total dedication. MPF MEBs are unable to conduct seaborne forced entry and lack utility for amphibious "desant." Therefore, at present the most probable amphibious "desant" force available to an operational commander would be an amphibious MEB. While a potent force in its own right, its deficiencies when compared with a MEF would naturally impose limitations on utilization and potential results.

As with shipping deficiencies, the future of the MV-22 Osprey, tilt-rotor aircraft, is nebulous. Although not absolutely essential to the conduct of OTH operations, this system greatly increases the range and thus the potential of proposed "desant" operations. The current troop-lifting helicopter, the CH-46 Sea Knight, is an aging airframe with limited capabilities. The MV-22 offers roughly a four-fold increase in lift capacity and can still carry the same 24 Marines presently transported by the CH-46. Additionally, its unrefueled operating radius of 400 miles would significantly improve the rapid delivery of a "desant" force inland.(82)

In addition to materiel and shipping deficiencies, doctrine which promotes the unique contributions of amphibious forces is lacking. Current doctrine and practices appear to indicate two principle employment scenarios. In a joint campaign, Marine utilization is characterized by sequential application of forces, with a MAGTF arriving early on, being committed to sustained operations as part of a larger ground combat force, and ultimately sacrificing the advantage offered by sea-based maneuverability. Subsequent application of amphibious forces appears limited to raids for tactical purposes. These raids lack the size, depth, and leverage necessary for operational relevance. The other scenario envisions a MAGTF as the sole expeditionary command comprising the main combat forces. This scenario is based on the MAGTF's maritime mobility, limited strategic airlift requirements, and independence of international boundaries. Thus, neither scenario exercises the potential for achieving operationally significant results. A proper joint doctrine for a MAGTF would reflect an amphibious force projection scenario whereby its operations would be synchronized with other major combat elements such as Army and Air Forces.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a linkage can definitely be discerned between the Soviet concepts of the Operational Maneuver Group and airborne desant and potential amphibious "desant" by a Marine Air-Ground Task Force. Employment of a MAGTF for amphibious "desant" offers the joint commander a viable option to achieve operationally significant

results through deep maneuver. Several factors support this assertion. First, available combat forces will be limited for future campaigns. The operational commander must attempt to synchronize their potential with opportunities presented by the enemy. As stated in FM 100-5, "the product of effective synchronization is maximum economy of force, with every resource used where and when it will make the greatest contribution to success and nothing is wasted or overlooked."(83) This contention is already gaining significance as commanders balance contingencies against impending force reductions.

Second, future campaigns will possess a maritime character. Most potential adversaries will possess national territories adjacent to the world's oceans. Excepting the Soviet Union, no enemy can hope to match the United States' preeminence in naval power. A detailed discussion of the threat facing future amphibious operations is beyond the scope of this study. However, modern technology available throughout the world, notably from mines, surface to air missiles and surface to surface missiles, will certainly present risks to future amphibious "desant."(84) Nevertheless, over-the-horizon insertion with multiple entry points, rapid concentration for surprise, and active deception measures should reduce prohibitive interference.

Once control of the enemy's littoral flank is attained, a new dimension in operational maneuver can be exploited. Future operational commanders must be prepared to capitalize on this potential advantage. As theory expounds and history demonstrates, he must have a force immediately available and capable of projecting

credible ground power ashore from the sea. However, once employed the capability is expended. The most operationally significant use of a MAGTF may not be in prolonged combat as an adjunct to the principal ground combat command. Therefore, introduction of this dimension to the battlefield environment will further complicate an operational commander's responsibilities. Still, there are no ready formulas and he alone must determine the degree to which maneuver, firepower and protection are maximized; must ensure these elements are effectively balanced; and must decide how to bring them to bear against the enemy.(85)

Third, in addition to an amphibious capability, a credible "desant" force must possess sufficient combat power to get the job done. Consistent with Tukhachevskiy and FM 100-5, this force must be strong enough to operate without support from the main ground combat force and of sufficient size to create a realistic threat to the enemy's rear. Simpkin also appreciated the importance of these characteristics. He proposed that the actual elements of the threat were presented by the conveyance of firepower, the systems combined with the means of delivering them to a point of decisive application. The means of delivery, potential momentum, was provided through self-sustainment.(86) Together, these elements of firepower and self-sustainability may be found configured and immediately available only in a Navy/Marine Corps Amphibious Ready Group.

Although the concept is feasible and a suitable force structure exists for development, three corrective measures to existing capabilities are required. First, lighter ground combat systems are

needed. Both the M1A1 tank and the M198 howitzer preclude the greatest potential for amphibious "desant." Nonetheless, systems are available for adoption which could expediently correct this deficiency. The LAV-25, with its existing variants and proposed assault gun model, is air-transportable by the CH-53E helicopter, and by the notional MV-22 Osprey. Lightweight multiple rocket launchers, improved mortars and precision guided munitions also offer attractive alternatives which would support speed, flexibility of delivery, and enhanced ground mobility.

Second, force size itself remains a critical factor. Although a MEF is the preferred organization for sustained combat operations, current naval assets are insufficient to permit its likely application by amphibious "desant." Therefore, a more realistic employment option might entail an increase in MEB assets, especially in light armor, artillery and anti-air defense systems. This "super MEB" could possess sufficient power to create a real threat, operate deep inland, and still be initially delivered within the constraints of present and projected amphibious shipping.

Third and perhaps the most critical, doctrine should be developed for this concept and promoted in future joint validation exercises. Current doctrine fails to adequately reflect the full spectrum of capabilities provided by maritime superiority and available amphibious forces. Doctrinal deficiencies also inhibit creation of proper training scenarios which are critical to the development and practice of force flexibility and synchronization. Such joint training is essential for operationally significant results in combat. Consequently, the lack of operational employment

doctrine relegates amphibious forces to missions which limit their contribution in joint operations. A doctrine is needed which emphasizes the amphibious force as a powerful means to create operationally significant battlefield conditions.

Theater commanders should be provided an alternative amphibious force option to achieve the best results from finite resources. Given sufficient assets and an operationally oriented doctrine , an Amphibious Ready Group can provide a viable "desant" force capable of operational maneuver today.

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